

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing amendment, Claims 2-5, 7-10 and 12-15 remain pending in the present Application. Claims 1, 6 and 11 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New Claims 14 and 15 have been added and are supported by the Specification and claims as originally filed; Claims 2-5, 7-10 and 12 have been amended to correct minor cosmetic matters of form. No new matter has been added.

A copy of an Information Disclosure Statement, filed November 16, 2001, is submitted herewith. Applicant has not received an acknowledged PTO Form 1449 with the Examiner's initials indicating consideration of this filing. Further, upon review of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office PAIR system, it does not appear that this IDS is recorded in the file contents history. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider the references listed on the submitted IDS and provide the appropriate initialed form in the next communication.

By way of summary, the Official Action presents the following issues: Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Fuji (U.S. Patent No. 5,617,400); Claims 3, 4, 8, 9 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Applicant appreciatively acknowledges the identification of allowable subject matter recited in Claims 3, 4, 8, 9 and 12. As Claims 3 and 8 have been placed in independent form, and previous claim dependencies adjusted accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that

the outstanding rejection of the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been rendered moot.¹

NEW CLAIMS

New Claims 14 and 15 recite substantially similar limitations to Claims 3 and 8 and are provided for presenting the Applicant's invention in a format which does not invoke 35 U.S.C. § 112, 6th paragraph (means-plus-function format). Accordingly, Applicant submits that new Claims 14 and 15 are likewise allowable.

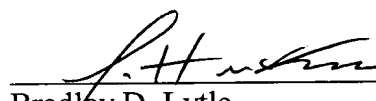
CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes that any additional formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this Application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application, including Claims 2-5, 7-10 and 12-15, is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ Applicant notes that Claim 8 has been placed in independent form, including the limitations of base Claim 6. The subject matter of intervening Claim 7 is not believed to impact the allowability of the subject matter of Claim 8, therefore, it has not been included in the independent recitation of the subject matter of Claim 8.